

## AN OBITUARY FOR PROF. JÓZEF KAŁUŻA

„Two things influenced the formation of contemporary medicine. One of them was Cartesian philosophy with its still valid criterion of scientific investigations: a maximal objectification of the observed events of nature, grounded in the reiteration of the events in the same conditions. [...] The second thing was the theory of cell pathology developed by Virchow. In the same moment as the conception of cell-pathology was introduced into medicine, the human being began to be seen as a multitude of structural elements called cells” (Józef Kałuża)<sup>1</sup>.

After the unexpected death of Professor Józef Kałuża at the age of 74 on the 26th of July 2003, not only Polish neuropathology but also Polish philosophy of medical investigations lost one of its most renowned minds.

Beginning in 1949, Professor Kałuża studied medical sciences for five years at the Medical Faculty of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. He did his Ph.D. thesis in neuropathology (*The dynamics of morphological changes in brain caused by mechanical injury*) in the *Department of Neuropathology of the Polish Academy of Science*. In 1962 he received a *Rockefeller Foundation* scholarship and spent one year at the *National Institutes of Health* (in Bethesda, Maryland, USA). In 1981 Professor Kałuża was promoted to a tenured professorship in neuropathology. He is the author of more than 110 articles published in medical periodicals and coauthor of many chapters in medical handbooks. As a scientist he participated in the „Interdisciplinary Seminary of «Science, Religion, History»” in Castel Gandolfo. The medical report said that the cause of his death was probably a stroke or cardiac arrest. His close colleagues

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<sup>1</sup> Józef Kałuża, *Humanistic and non-humanistic aspects of reductionism in contemporary medicine* [Humanistyczne i ahumanistyczne aspekty redukcjonizmu we współczesnej medycynie], Jerzy A. Janik (ed.), *VI. Sem. Interdyscyplinarne w Castel Gandolfo, 6-9 Sierpnia 1990*, Kraków, Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1992, pp. 75–85 (cited from p. 77).

have written detailed obituaries<sup>2</sup>, so I am going to write some words about the philosophical side of his scientific investigations.

Professor Kałuża was an empirical scientist involved in philosophical questions and acquainted with philosophical argumentation. Along with his work as a neuropathologist he was also the professor of medical ethics in the *Medical Faculty of the Jagiellonian University*. As a scientist and as a philosopher he saw very clearly two things. The first of them was that the rapid advance of the life sciences is raising increasingly complicated problems about how the new medical knowledge should be used. The second thing was that these problems need to be tackled by new, strongly interdisciplinary research. These two interlacing insights made his ethical lectures a matter of great practical importance. During his lectures he discussed – among others – such subjects as: euthanasia, transplantation, genetic engineering. He explored and shared themes and concerns of both philosophy and medical sciences. On one hand, he saw that the central issues in medical research and practice have important philosophical dimensions, for treating diseases and promoting health medicine involves presuppositions about human goals and values. On the other hand, he knew that the concerns of philosophy often significantly relate to the nature of knowledge and the human condition in the modern world.

For that reason Professor Kałuża was confident not only with the works of the classical philosophers such as Aristotle or modern philosophers as René Descartes, but also with the contemporary philosophical authors such as Karl Popper, Ludwig Wittgenstein or with the philosophical insights of the famous neurologist John Eccles. Similar to John Eccles, Professor Kałuża saw that medicine adopts a nearly dualistic nature of the human being: its materialistic and mental aspects. In the development of science, he saw that medical science is coming very near to a coincidence of the two sides of the human existence: mental and physical. In his philosophical thinking he was an antireductionist. The same should be said of his philosophical view on medical research. He was strongly against a philosophical reduction (to simplify our view of the world), but he saw the seriousness of scientific reductionism – to simplify the verification of medical theories. Professor Kałuża could see both sides of the human being – as a whole and as an autonomous person – together<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., the profound and personally composed Obituary about the medical and scientific career of Professor Kałuża, written by his professional colleagues: Doc. dr hab. med. Dariusz Adamek and Prof. dr hab. med. Jerzy Stachura (*Collegium Medicum of the Jagiellonian University*) and published in „Polish Journal of Pathology”, Vol. 54:4 (2003).

<sup>3</sup> See his speech: *Autonomy of the patient – autonomy of the physician* during „The Second World Congress of Philosophy of Medicine”, Kraków 2000.

During the last two years I had the possibility to met Professor Kałuza several times. With a lot of patience and sympathetic understanding he helped me in the preparing of my book on the philosophy of consciousness. Our conversations revolved usually about the philosophical and neurological problems concerning the methodological question: how to find the neural correlates of consciousness. He was literally a master of scientific conversation, knowing how to extend the subject not only to the philosophical dimension but also to the religious or social.

I can see him wearing his white work clothes and sitting in his small office. The microscope on the table is surrounded by boxes with small quadrangular glass slides with neuropathological preparations. From the bookcase of the reference library look out thick and big neuropathological books (mostly of them in English) along with some philosophical books. Sometimes one of his laboratory staff members is coming and bringing a paper or a new slide. His good and friendly face is paying attention and his eyes, behind glasses, are looking a little bit skeptical but very deeply interested.

If I should briefly characterize the person of Professor Józef Kałuza, I would say that he was a real „Renaissance Man,” living and working according to the Oath of Hippocrates „Above all, do no harm”. He was a father of two sons and a grandfather, a sensitive medical doctor, a man of broad interests but above all a penetrating neuropathologist and philosopher.

*Józef BREMER*